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WHERE MAIL IS BETTER THAN PAYDAYS

To the Editor:

Yesterday I was recalling my pleasant and peaceful memories of my leave in Tucson last August. I then decided to write a letter about how it is day after day in the South China Sea on an Anti-Submarine Carrier (ASW).

CARRIER DUTY is not dangerous except for the pilots of the Fast Attack Carriers of the Coral Sea and Constellation type.

My ship in Yankee Station off Viet Nam has plenty to do. The routine of daily duties certainly gets on your nerves. But the hostile battlefields seem so far away and unreal. In fact it is really difficult to believe or picture in our mind's eye that soldiers, Marines and airmen are being shot, killed and wounded almost every hour of the day. How lucky we are to be on the Yorktown, snug in the rack at night...

Most berthing compartments average 95 to 100 degrees with an almost closed ear feeling as in the hot Tucson summers in a parked car at a shopping center with all the windows and doors closed tight...

Also for three days we've had no fresh water except for drinking water. No showers are open. Some people take what is called a "bird bath" in the wash basins...

At least there's no chance of Vietcong sneaking up with mortar fire in the small hours of the night.

PROBABLY THE best part of this sea war or Yankee Station area of potential war is anticipating the arrival of the COD from ashore from Subic Bay, Luzon Philippines, or any major nearby military activity with a sufficiently large airfield for landing planes. Our COD is a (CIA) aircraft that is nine years old now. But it does get the job done.

Mail is the only thing more important to us than paydays...

Now we are hoping for liberty in Bangkok, Thailand. This is our reward, so to speak, for our last 10 days at sea from Manila in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization's Operation (Sea Imp) SEATO's naval exercise to determine readiness and coordination between these member nation's navies on a combined effort.

PROBABLY A BIG portion of the day at sea is consumed by day-dreaming of home and family at the end of our 7-month cruise in Westpac (Western Pacific) and the days of leave we can take after arrival in Long Beach, Calif...

Writing is about my only pastime and I could really write to anyone who would care enough to write me a card or letter...

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